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Thomaston, Conn.

(field worker)

December 7, 1938 FOLKLORE OF CLOCK MAKING

Note: The home life, the town affairs, the social angles of the town of Thomaston (named for the famed Seth Thomas), and the domestic economy of the clock workers were a little heavy going for our 80-year old informant, Arthur Botsford.

Mr. Botsford lived too close to the machines. He took his work so seriously that he had little time for recreation, and his home was simply a place in which to recover enough energy to last him through another day. At eighty, Botsford's age on retirements one's mind is not always active enough to embrace diversified fields. Botsford's mind retains the mechanics of clock shop work, the way a cam, a die, a spindle, a verge, or an escapement is made ... how it functions, the type of metal used in its manufacture, the details. Some people might say that he had wheels in his head. The wheels certainly left an impression on his mind.

We sought the domestic angles from other sources. After all, if Botsford is not ready to converse easily on his “family affairs” material furnished by him would be valueless.

From the fifty-odd pensioners gathered on the sunny side of the Town Hall, from the assembly in the Fire House, and from a few of the men still employed at the clock shop, we have gathered little snatches of conversation, little tales of this and that, and their reactions to change in a company town.

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Mr. Charles Smith, employee Seth Thomas Clock Co. (37 year service), Thomaston, Connecticut.

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The query was: -- “Are the old days really considered better than the present, and why?”

Charlie Smith, Yankee, speaks: -- “There's a lot in it. You have to 15045 2 allow for the fact that most any man thinks the days when he was a young sprig were the best ever, but still there's a lot in it.

“How do you suppose the people got along in times past, here? Think they had an easy time? There wasn't any relief in those days. ...of course, I'll admit that it wasn't the same kind of a problem as it is now ... but still nobody did very much for them. They just pinched and scraped, and got by somehow, without asking for charity.

“I'll tell you one thing, the women in those days were better managers. They knew how to stretch a dollar. They know how to buy. The butcher and the grocer didn't put anything over on them, and they got the most for their money all along the line.

“They know how to cook, too. They couldn't always get the best cuts of meats but if they had to get cheaper cuts, they could cook it so's it tasted just as good. There's ways of cooking, if you know how. Of course, they bought things cheaper, too. Most everybody bought in bulks and that's the way they could save. Most of ‘em made their own bread; they'd buy flour by the barrel; milk they'd have delivered same as it in now, but some took it by the pail.

“I don't think there was as much milk bought in those days, though, as there is now. They'd feed it only to babies; grown people and older children wouldn't bother with it.

“What could be bought a good deal cheaper. There were several slaughter-houses around; one of them up by the old White Lily Pond off the Torrington Road. The farmars'd bring their cattle and pigs down there and have ‘em slaughtered and then they'd go around from house to house selling meat.

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“Liquor? Well, there were four or five saloons in town, but they were run pretty carefully. There wasn't any of them what you might call a dive. And I don't think there was as much

drinking going on then an there in now. There were always drunkards, of course, same as there is today; but I think there was a bigger percentage of total abstainers than there is today, too. [?]

“Women, for instance, didn't touch it. And they didn't have much use for a man that drank. When you went to one of the old fancy balls at the Opera House, for instance, if you took a snort beforehand you had to go to a lot of trouble to conceal it.

“Some of the boys used to tank up before they went to call for their girls, but they always had to got some ‘sen-sen' or some kind of seed they used to sell, to disguise the odor of liquor. And of course if you took any of that stuff, the smell of it on your breath was a dead give-away that you'd been drinking. [“That old Opera House used to be going every night in the week, pretty near, during the winter season. [I guess some of them must have told you about the big shows they used to have there.] start here [?] “And if it wasn't a show, it would be some kind of a fair, or a ball. The fire department would give them, and the Odd Fellows, and St. Thomas' Church, and the Foresters, and the Masons, and the G.A.R. The Masons used to give one that was always the highlight of the season. [?] “I tell you, a Ball used to be something. About a month before the thing was held, you'd see cards around in all the store windows, 4 advertising it. And if you were going to take a lady, you had to ask her just as soon as those posters appeared, because she always had to get a new dress and go to a lot of trouble for the big affair. [?] “And you had to be slicked up pretty well yourself, too, and put your best foot forward. You'd have to hire a hack, if you were doing the thing right, and you'd have to speak for that a few weeks in advance if you wanted to be sure of getting it. [?] “When the big night came, you got your bouquet of flowers from the florists and with your dancing pumps wrapped in a paper parcel in your inside coat pocket, you called on the lady in your hired hack. [?] “You'd get down to the Opera House just before eight, it wasn't stylish to be late those days; and when you got there, you'd escort your girl as far as the ladies' room, and leave her there, and then you'd join the other lads in the gent's room, and put on your dancing pumps. Then you'd go back and wait ... you'd always have to wait ... while she finished her primping, and when she

came out you'd escort her to a seat, and wait for the grand march to be called. No, the boys didn't wear evening clothes, but you had to have a white vest. Maybe the whole night, bouquet, and hack and tickets of admission and all, would cost you four or five dollars. Usually, the dance would break up at midnight, because all the lights in town went out then. Sometimes, for the big affairs, they'd notify the Power House to keep the current on until one. But they always had to pay for that extra hour of electricity. Always had a big orchestra.

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Billy Hanley used to play for a lot of them. He had a ten-piece outfit. [?] “Yes, four or five dollars was a lot of money but it was worth it. Nobody got big money. Yet they all raised big families and a lot of them managed to save money and buy their homes. They did without things. Kids didn't have any money to spend. Didn't know what money looked like.

“You got about two dollars a day in the shop. If you went piece work sometimes you could make as high as two-seventy, but at that they began to cut you. But as I said, life was a lot less complicated. Nobody had very much and they never thought they were doing without things they ought to have. It was just accepted as a matter of course.

“If you were flush of a Sunday, you took your best girl out riding in a hired rig. Cost you two-and-a-half for the day, and you were lucky to get one, because they were in big demand. If you wanted a rig for a holiday like Decoration Day, or Labor Day, you had to ask for it three weeks ahead of time. [?] “There were three livery stables here, and they were going all the time. Some of the young sports around town owned their own horses, but not many. You couldn't do it on shop pay. Everybody walked. [They came to work from Reynold's Bridge, and way up on Fenn Road, and from over on the east sides and thought nothing of it. Some of them walked miles every day.?] [?] [When I was working here in the watch shop, I lived over on the East Side, over on Prospect 6 Street. It used to take me twenty minutes to walk home, twenty minutes to eat my dinner, and twenty minutes to walk back. No time to rest after dinner. We worked ten hours a days and nine on Saturdays.

Afterwards we got Saturday afternoon off. But you always had work. When Things got a little slack you went to the boss and told him you were caught up, and he's he'd say, ‘Well, make a little stock.’ They didn't let anybody go, that is not the way they do now, and you didn't see the men out of work you do in these days. But nowadays they won't make stock. Don't want to take a chance with it.” [?] (end of the Charley Smith story)

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Mr. George Richmond (clockmaker), Thomaston, Conn.

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The query: “Is religion necessary? How do people feel about the Church in these villages where recreational opportunities are few? What about the Church in the ‘good old days?’”

“Seems to me people paid a great deal more attention to their religion a few years ago than they do now. My folks were kinda taken with Spiritualism -- I guess that's kinda dyin' out -- I had an aunt went in for it. She was kinda an upstanding, independent sorta woman, didn't know whether to believe in it or not, but she went to a meetin' one time. Note [?]

“The medium tried to get in touch with her husband. Finally she sed; ‘Is there anyone here named Marthy?’”

“ ‘That's me,' says my aunt!”

“ ‘Well,' says the medium, ‘Henry is here, and he's knockin' to come in.’”

“ ‘Leave him come in,' says my aunt. ‘He never had to knock when he was to home, and he don't have to knock now'. Somebody started laughin' and that broke up the meetin.’”

“But my dad and mother had experience one time. I can remember hearin' them tell about it often. They was in bed, both of them, and my dad felt his side of the bed kinda raise in the air. He thought she was playin' some kind of a trick on him, so he didn't say nothin' at first, but it happened two-three times and finally he says to her: ‘What in blazes you tryin' to do?’

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“She says, ‘Whys ain't that you moving the bed?’”

“And he says, ‘No, by gosh, it ain't me movin' the bed.’”

“And they both got up in a hurry and went to the other room to sleep. Never did find out what did it. But they both believed a little more in Spiritualism after that.

(Mr. Richmond's ideas about Spiritualism were the nearest thing to religion he cared to talk about.)

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Mr. Richmond, gazing at a red truck with groceries for a chain store, remembered. Somebody had been talking about stores, merchandise, the marketing of goods.

“I don't know ... Now you asked me about stores, and of course I can't tell you anything about Seth Thomas' store, because that was gone before my time, but of course the stores here when I was a young fellow were all run by independent merchants. Today the independents is havin' a tough time gettin' by unless they belong to some association, which most of them do, I guess.

“But I don't think much of them chains. Tell you why, I was in Duff's one day and a lady came in and she says to old Pete: ‘How much are your canned peaches?' He told her, twenty-five cents, or eighteen cents, or whatever it was.

“ ‘Oh, My,' she says, ‘I can get ‘em cheaper than that over at the First National.’”

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“Well, Sir, they was a salesman standin' there listenin' to everything, and he spoke up, and he says: ‘Madam,' he says, ‘how much are they at the First National?' She told him, I forget what ‘twas, say it was twenty cents. And he says to her: ‘Here, Lady, take this twenty cents and go over there and get a can and bring them back here.’ So by golly, she did.

“When she got back, he took the can, and he says to Pete, ‘Now,' he says, ‘Let's have a can of yours.’”

“He got a can opener, and he opened both those cans right on the counter. ‘Now, lady,' he says, ‘look here.’ And he took about half a dozen big slices outa Pete's can. ‘And look here, ‘he says, and he took about four small ones out of the other can. ‘You see that?' he says. ‘You still think you're gettin' a bargain over there? I tell you, Lady,' he says. ‘You get what you pay for, no matter where you get it. Only sometimes, if you ain't careful, you get less.’ Now, he was right, absolutely right, the way I look at it.”

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Mr. Richmond continues: --

“How'd the people used to live, back forty-fifty years ago? Lived the same's they do now, hand to mouth. I don't know's they was so much better off, they was and they weren't. They might have saved money, buyin' in bulk, true enough, but some things used to be high, same's they be now.

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“Winter time, especially, things'd be high. Used to stock up on everything they could, potatoes and the like of that, and the women always did a lot of cannin'. Put up enough preserves in the fall to last ‘em all winter.

“You couldn't get oranges and fresh fruits. Pineapples came high. So they used to put up a lot of pears and peaches. My mother used to put up 75 to 100 jars of fruit and berries in the fall. We used to have squash pies in the fall, too, but we'd keep the hard squash; (Hubbard), until Christmas and make Christmas pies. In the winter time we'd get more fresh meat. The farmers would dress off their stock and turn it into market and it would be fairly cheap. Butter and eggs was usually high in the winter. George Bradstreet over here, he got 65 cents a pound for butter. Some of the farmers when the supply was plenty would put it down in jars, and sell it later when the demand was greater. But of course all the creameries do that kind of thing today. Summer time we lived mostly on salt meats, and fresh vegetables. Most everybody raised something, if they had a yard at all. Note [Early days on farm?]

“Speakin' about farming I'll never forget the time Lizzie Gleason's brother and four other lads got the idea they'd like to try farm life. They went to Goshen ... had to go in a wagon up from Torrington. When they got to the place, the farmer asked who could mow. Well, none of ‘em could, it seemed. So he asked could they do anything else. Gleason said he could milk. The farmer put them to 11 hayin' and told the other two to feed the horses. They didn't know how to go about it, and they scared the animals darned near outa the barn. That night they went in to supper, and the farmer's wife, she set out the feed. Wa'n't nothin' but some cornmeal puddin'. The boys says to the farmer: ‘Is this all they be?' Says the farmer: ‘There's some bread there; an' crackers. What more d' you want?' That night they went to bed, and they had to sleep on one of them old cord beds, without springs, and a straw mattress. Straw was so thin, when the boys woke up in the mornin' they said you could uv played checkers on the marks on their backs. They lugged in the milk in the mornin' and the woman she says, “What's a matter with them cows; be they a-shrinkin'?”

They got more cornmeal puddin' for breakfast. They stayed on a week and quit. Said they thought they'd get at least three square meals a day, but all they got was cornmeal puddin', and boiled pork and beans once in awhile. When they quit, the farmer said: ‘What did ye ‘spect, roast beef and chicken livers every day?”

“That was farm life, in the good old days!

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“Sorta wanderin', ain't I? ... Well, before the trolleys came, Duff and the other merchants all had teams. Freight came by train from Waterbury, up the Naugy Road, and they all used to go over to the depot and get it. The trolley killed that practice.

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“Wa'n't no bakers. Everybody bought flour by the barrel or half, and the women all made bread. Then bakers started comin' up from Waterbury once a week to peddle and a lotta folks began buyin' bakers' bread. There was Kelly , and Trott , and a Dutchman baker.

“You worked from 6:30 in the mornin' ‘till noon; you went back at one o'clock and worked ‘til 5:30 that afternoon; then you went uptown and did your tradin'. Lottsa folks used to hang around the stores and visit; or gab in the Post Office. Stores was open ‘til ten and the saloons was open ‘til twelve. There was quite a little drinkin' but wa'n't so many heavy drinkers.

“Nothin' to do at nights as a rule, ‘less there was sumpin goin' on at the Opr'y House. Used to have some pretty good shows there. I remember the first night it opened, show called The Two Orphans. I was just a young lad then, helpin' out at home, and like a lotta others, I didn't have the money to go. Gus Blakeslee and Ed Fenton run the place and Ed Bradley, he was sheriff then. There was an old wood house and water closet right outside over on Clay Street, and I'll bet there was fifty lads on it, tryin' to see. I was one. Bradley came out, and he says, ‘You fellows get off, or you'll get in trouble.’”

“But they was a young lad named ‘Jud', son of the man who ran the farm for Aaron Thomas ... they lived there then, and Judd, he says: ‘My Father hires this house, and you can't put us off here.’ Bradley went back in, and the lads began to throw stones ... small pebbles ... up against the window to attract attention. Bradley came out again 13 and he said this time someone was goin' to the lockup. But then Gus Blakeslee came out, and he says to Ed: ‘We don't want to have no trouble here; don't you arrest nobody. I'll fix it.’ And he goes inside and pulls down a curtain on that window.

“Say ‘fore I forget it, I want to tell you a story about Seth Thomas, the original Seth Thomas. ‘Twas told to me by Old Man Cassel, who used to drive team for him ... you remember the Cassel House? Ike was more'n eighty years old when he told it to me a good sixty years ago. Note Anecdote

“Seems he wanted to go to Waterbury to do some tradin' one day, and when old Seth came down to the barn that mornin' Ike asked him could he go. ‘Go ahead,' says Seth. ‘I'm goin' down myself and if I didn't have such a heavy load I'd give you a ride. Maybe I will have room for you on the way back, but I won't promise.’

“So Ike goes to Waterbury afoot, and he does his tradin', and along about 12:30 he met old Thomas. The old man says to him: ‘Well, Isaac, you better start for home. I got a heavy load here, and a couple of men with me, and here it is comin' on to snow, and I guess I won't be able to take you'.

“So Ike, he says it's allright, and he starts for home. Up by the Gate House, old Seth passed him out, and he hollers: ‘Peg along, Isaac, peg along. I'd like to pick you up, but I gotta heavy load here.’

“Just above Frost's Bridge, Ike seen a black object stickin' out of the snow, and he picks it up, and what is it but the Old Man's 14 wallet. Ike knows whose it is, the minute he sees it. Well, it wa'n't long before Ike met the old man comin' back, and the men with him, and two

fresh horses. ‘Fore Ike got a chance to say a word, the old man hollered: ‘Get back home as fast as you can and take care of them horses!' and on he goes in a tearing hurry.

“So Ike goes home and he left his bundles at his house, and then he went up to the barn ... stood right there on Litchfield Street where Ben Curtis used to live ... and took care of the horses. The old man came back about nine o'clock, and he was in a very snappish mood, says to Ike ... ‘Here, take care of the horses! These men are about done in. They walked most of the way to Waterbury, and most of the way backs.’”

“‘Mr. Thomas ...’ says Ike.

“ ‘Don't Mister Thomas me,' says the Old Man. ‘Do as you're told!’”

“Next mornin' the old man came down to the barn, still snappish, and when Ike tried to talk to him he was told to mind his own business. Old Seth went down to the shop, and he called all the help together, and he told them how he'd got the money to pay them in Waterbury the day before, and how he'd lost it somewhere. ‘Now Boys,' he says, ‘You'll just have to work until we make some more clocks and sell ‘em, and then you'll get what's comin' to you.’”

“Well, Ike hung around and helped do the chores. Late that afternoon the old man called in the others, around the barn, and told them the same story. When they'd all gone about their business, Ike pulls out the wallet, and he says to Old Seth: ‘Do you know who this belongs to?’”

“The Old man grabbed it and he says: ‘You keep your mouth shut, and say nothin'.’ ... Just like that. That was all he said. No ‘thank yous', or anything else. Well, couple days later, he called all the help, and he says he'd got a loan somewhere, and he was goin' to pay their wages. He never let on what really happened, and neither did Ike.

“Ike said he let him go to Waterbury just to see what the Old Man would do, and then he didn't have the nerve to bring out the wallet in front of the help, so he waited ‘til he got Old Seth alone to show it to him. Said the Old Man would uv been madder'n blazes, if he thought Ike was tryin' to put somethin' over on him.

“Well, Sir, the Old Man never said no more about it, but when spring came, he began to build that house up on Grand Street where Mose Ariel lives now. And early in the fall, he says to old Ike: ‘Cassel, I got somethin' to show you.’

“And he took Ike up and showed him the house.

“ ‘Well, Isaac, what do you think of it?' says he.

“Ike said it looked like a pretty good house.

“Old Seth handed him the deed ... ‘Here,' he says, ‘that's for keepin' your mouth shut.’”

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On another theme, George Richmond continues the march: --

“The clock business is gone ... all gone. We used to have great times in this town. The young lads these days are too smart. I was down to the gas station the other day, cold enough to freeze the ears 16 off a brass monkey, it was, and a lad came in, in a big car, says to the young feller that works there: ‘Gimme a change of oil.’ And the young lad says, smart as can be: ‘What'll you have ... light summer oil?' And the young feller in the car just steps on the gas and drives away; didn't say nothin'.

The young folks these days wouldn't be satisfied to live the way they had to when I was a kid. Nothin' goin' on in town at all. Not a thing. Remember when they organized this fire department? They only wanted fifty in each company, and they must have had about two hundred applications each one. They had their pick ... took the ones they thought was the

best. It was quite a thing to belong to the fire department, I tell you. Had some big times, the firemen did. They used to go to parades all over the State, and they come off with a few prices, too. They had a bunch of kids marchin' with ‘em one time, somewheres they went, and the boys had each a big white letter on their breasts ... spelled ‘C-R-E-S-C-E-N-T'... the name of the company. Well, later on the Hooks had a big argument with the Hose company, and they split away and formed their own outfit. Called themselves, Number One and Number Two. ?

“They had some great affairs up ut the Opr'y House. I see one-hundred and twenty couples on the Opr'y House floor. Dancin' the California reel. They form a circle on the outside and one on the inside for that, and then they interchange. It's quite a sight. Gus Blakeslee was prompter. They had to pay for each dance. Each man had to pay five cents a dance; the women danced, free. Note [Customs?]

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“Kids never had no money to spend. Families were big, and there was a lot of mouths to feed, and no extra cash to spare. Do I think they were better off? Sure I do. What've they got today? Cars and radios and what not, but still they ain't satisfied. A man with a big family ain't got the time to get dissatisfied.

“They were in debt to the stores all the while, most of them. Couldn't meet their bills lots of times at the end of the month. Shops used to pay off once a month, years ago, and then they'd all settle up with the storekeepers. They're in debt all the time now, ain't they? In debt for their cars and their radios, and as soon as they get one thing paid up for on the installment plan, out they go and get something else. And what've they got to show for it in the long run.

“They was one merchant here, durin' the panic had over $2,500 owed him. And I heard him say once, he didn't lose eight dollars of it, all told. That's the way people used to be about debts.

(NOTE: Unfortunately the informant did not specify what panic .) 1887

“When the car came along, and people began to buy on the installment plan, things changed fast. The fellow who owns a car takes money away from local merchants and puts it into pleasure. Years ago, a lad would hire a team and take his girl to Waterbury, and see a show and have supper. And he wouldn't do it again for a coupla weeks.

“Maybe the cities are better off today, but the small town ain't. The bigger man is getting the trade today. Cars take out the money 18 just like the chain store takes it out. They're runnin' the small merchant outa business. When the trolley came in, and then the car, and the movies, and the radio, then things in this town began to change; ‘spose they did everywhere.

“I remember the first trolley that came up from Waterbury ... carried back everybody that could crowd onto it for a free ride down. Gave ‘em a free ride back at night, too. Got to be quite a thing to go to Waterbury, after you could get home at 12 or 12:30 at night; before that you wouldn't go once a month. [?]

“The movies drove out the old shows and the radio hurt the movies. Something will come along to drive them out, you wait and see. “ * * * * ” Andrew MacCurrie, Scot, came to America 46 years ago, entered the employ of Seth Thomas Clock Company, worked for the company about twenty years. His comments on the advantages of employment at the “Old Company,” his feeling for the “good old days,” are worthy of record. [?] “For one thing, ” he says. [?] “ You ou were always sure of a job. If you got laid off in this clock shop here, you could always go to another. These days they favor their home-town boys. Look what they did over in Bristol last summer ... laid off all their out-of-town help, and told them when they did come back they'd better be prepared to make their homes in Bristol. start here

“Another thing, they didn't push you like they do these days. Nowadays everything is rush, rush, rush! A man had a job years ago, he could damn near do what he wanted to, within

reason, and as long as his work was satisfactory. 19 [?] “Now, I used to have piecework jobs. I was buffin' for awhile, and I did other work, too, in the case shop. Some of them were hard and some were easy, and some of the prices were tough and some were good. [?] “Know what we used to do? When we got a good job we'd get some work ahead .... wouldn't put it in on the ticket, understand ... then when we got a poor job, we'd use that extra work and still be able to make a little money. You can't do that now, they watch you too damn close. You've got to account for every minute of your time.” [?]

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Henry Odenwald, Andrew MacCurrie, and George Richmond meet in the Barber Shop, where Mr. Odenwald has been “polishing chins” for forty years. There's bad blood between MacCurrie and Richmond. The latter slips on his overcoat and walks away toward the firehouse.

“George gave you an earful, okay,” remarked Odenwald.

“Most of it balooney, no doot,” from Mac.

“George has a preety gude memory. I heard him lining up that old Opra Hause crowd yesterday ... Ah, they did have great times there. I belonged to the Liederkranz Singing Society; once a year we used to give a concert there. We had some fine artists come from all over the State; some fine artists.”

“But they'd put the lights out on you at 12 o'clock,” Mac grouched.

“Why I remember when they had a gas-light up in that tower clock.”

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“They needed it, too, on a dark night. When the lights went out you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. Old Man Grimshaw, over at the Power House, used to go by the moon. He figured the moon was out 15 days in a mouth, and the other 15 you didn't need

street lights. One time I had taken a few drops too many aboard and I got on the wrong streets comin' home. Didn't know where I was, that's the God's truth. So I had to travel all the way back down to the Town Hall and look up at that light in the clock and kinda get me bearin's."

"That's right. I used to go down to the Liederkranz of a Saturday night after I'd closed up and sometimes it was so dark I could hardly find my way home. I didn't have any too much to drink, either, only a few beers."

"You didna go out much nights in those days, anyway. No place to go, through the week, unless there was something going on at the Opera House. Of course, all the boys used to come to the Fire House and play cards. You'd see three or four tables going on each side. You could always come down here, if you didn't have any place else to go. I lived in Waterbury for awhile, one time, and I didn't have any place to go at all, I couldn't stand it."

"But we had clubs and lodges. There was the Criterion Clubs and there was another one down under Bradstreet's Block where they used to play poker."

"On Sundays ... Now I was telling this up at the house the other day and the kids got a great laugh out of it ... on Sundays about 4:30 21 there'd be a copula hundred people over on the depot platform to watch the train come down from Winsted. Nothing else to do, and it was someplace to go. Just walk over and stand there, and watch the train come in and wait until it pulled out and then go back. Sundays was awful quiet. You come downtown and you didn't see a soul on the streets. Once in awhile, you'd see a team go by."

"I used to work for Thompson over at the old Hotel," MacCurrie said; "and sometimes it wa'n't quiet on Sundays over there. There'd be a bunch outside waitin' to get in for a drink. Of course, he wa'n't 'sposed to sell but the idee was to let 'em in and give 'em their drinks and then shoo 'em out. He'd hurry 'em along, and ask 'em had they got enough, and herd

‘em all towards the door. There'd be another bunch waitin' outside. And half the ones had been in there fust ‘ud come back with the second gang.”

“I never liked the beer they sold over there,” complained Odenwald.

“ ‘Twas good beer; Ballantine's Ale. ‘Twas better beer'n they make now ... some new people has got it, since repeal. The boys over in the castin' shop used to come out durin' the day, in summer time, and get a shot of liquor and a beer chaser. Called is it a ‘casters' cocktail. Nobody ever said nothin' to them. I guess they knew ‘was being done. They'd drink ice water in there on the casting floor all day long and they'd sweat, and then they'd feel the need of something else, and over they'd come for their liquor. And they'd go back and sweat all the more.”

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Mr. Odenwald continued: “That Thompson, he was a funny chap. I went over there one time to get a room for some musician we had coming for the Liederkranz, and he told me they never held rooms for anyone. I asked him if he couldn't make an exception and he said, ‘No,' it was a rule. So I said, ‘What am I goin' to do with this fellow?' and he said; ‘Well, send him over and we'll take care of him.’ He knew he could do it, but he had to make it look hard.”

“He ran a nice place,” MacCurrie defended; “Drummers used to come from all around. If they had to call anywhere in this section, they'd put up here. There wasn't a good hotel in Waterbury, and the only one that could compare with this one was the Conley Inn, in Torrington. That was the best hotel around here.”

Mr. Odenwald: “I never liked their beer.”